

# LutheranWoman

September 2005

**TODAY**

PROCESSED

AUG 23 2005

GTU LIBRARY



**Transformation One Foot at a Time**  
**The Benefits of Shopping**

**Boldly Saying No**  
**God 101: Covering the Basics**





Save for a brand-new sedan.



Save for a remodeled kitchen.



Save for a once-in-a-lifetime family trip.



*The fact is, choices are never easy. Very often, our choices in life are dictated not only by our resources, but also by our values. At Thrivent Financial for Lutherans we understand, because we share your values. We can help you build enough financial resources to do the things you need to do, as well as things you'd like to do. To contact one of our financial representatives, call 800-THRIVENT, or visit [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com)*



**Thrivent Financial for Lutherans®**  
**Where Values Thrive.™**



10



16



34

**Editor** Kate Sprutta Elliott  
**Managing Editor** Terri Lackey  
**Associate Editor** Audrey Novak Riley  
**Communications Director** Deb Bogaert

**Art Direction** On Track Visual Communications  
**Cover** Eastcott Momatiuk

## DEPARTMENTS

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 7 SEPTEMBER 2005

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>4 <b>Voices</b></p> <p>5 <b>Give Us This Day</b></p> <p>6 <b>Mothering Seasons</b></p> <p>14 <b>Health Wise</b></p> <p>28 <b>Bible Study</b><br/> <b>Act Boldly in the</b><br/> <b>Fruit of the Spirit</b></p> <p>36 <b>Praying for Peacemakers</b></p> <p>41 <b>Grace Notes</b></p> <p>42 <b>Amen!</b></p> | <p><b>Introductions, Awards, and New Beginnings</b> <i>Kate Elliott</i></p> <p><b>Great Crowd of Witnesses</b> <i>Marj Leegard</i></p> <p><b>Lollipops, Literature, and Love</b> <i>Sally Ketchum</i></p> <p><b>Is Sexism Hazardous to Your Health?</b> <i>Molly M. Ginty</i></p> <p><b>Session 1: Act Boldly with Love</b> In this first session of the new Bible study, we learn about different kinds of boldness and different ways of acting them out. We'll talk about how Mary acts boldly with love as she anoints Jesus' feet in John 12:1-8. <i>Sue Gamelin</i></p> <p><b>One Shared Meal: Peace-building in Russia</b> <i>Anne Basye</i></p> <p><b>United through Baptism</b> <i>Linda Post Bushkofsky</i></p> <p><b>To See and Respond</b> <i>Catherine Malotky</i></p> |
|--|---|

## ACT BOLDLY WITH LOVE

In the New Testament, we are commanded to "Love your neighbor as yourself." There are many ways to act boldly with love, but by God's Spirit, they work together to heal conflict and hurt, promote peace, and transform lives.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>10 <b>God 101: Covering the Basics</b></p> <p>16 <b>Unmasking the Meatloaf Controversy</b></p> <p>22 <b>Transformation One Foot at a Time</b></p> <p>26 <b>Boldly Saying No</b></p> <p>34 <b>Creating a Culture of Peace</b></p> | <p>Growing up in church, we learn we're all loved by God. But our children may discover in their senior year of high school that, while God loves them, the colleges of their choice feel differently. <i>Anne Basye</i></p> <p>We all experience conflict from time to time. What matters is how we deal with it. Resolving conflicts—large or small—calls for a cool head and an understanding of what lies beneath. <i>Linda Luke</i></p> <p>Two homeless men who have never been to a Maundy Thursday service teach the congregation and clergy what washing a friend's feet is really all about. <i>Lynn C. Ramshaw</i></p> <p>Only a genuine yes or no can contribute to building the reign of God. And, at times, saying no reveals the yes of a faithful heart. <i>Donna Hacker Smith</i></p> <p>The UN's annual International Day of Peace on September 21 challenges people to think and respond differently to tensions in their communities. <i>Deanna Larson</i></p> |
|---|---|

## PLUS . . .

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>8 <b>Women of the ELCA Scholarship Program Making a Difference</b></p> <p>20 <b>The Benefits of Shopping</b></p> <p>40 <b>Action &amp; Advocacy Guide</b></p> <p>43 <b>Directory of Reader Services</b></p> | <p>Learn about how this scholarship program supports a diverse group of women as they pursue their callings in various fields of study. <i>Emily Hansen</i></p> <p>The LWR Handcraft Project: gifts that make a world of difference. <i>Brenda Meier</i></p> <p>Resources and links to help you in your advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Subscription, editorial, and ordering information.</p> |
|--|---|



# Introductions, Awards, and New Beginnings

by Kate Elliott

WITH THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE SOME INTRODUCTIONS TO MAKE. FIRST, *LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY* HAS NEW staff. I am the new editor, and Audrey Riley is our new associate editor. We join managing editor Terri Lackey, whose focus, talent, and hard work kept the magazine on track during this time of transition.

We all are grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of this magazine, a respected and award-winning publication. *LWT* is a wonderful gift not only to those who participate in Women of the ELCA, but to all women in this church. We want the magazine to help readers continue to grow in faith through Bible study, gain strength through stories that inspire and inform, and feel connected to their faith communities and the wider church.

Speaking of award-winning . . . *Lutheran Woman Today* was honored with several accolades this year. From the Associated Church Press, *LWT* won six awards: The Best of Class award of merit for special-interest magazine; two awards of excellence, one for Bible resource (the Audrey West study on the parables) and for the information brochure/poster; one award of merit; and two honorable mentions. From the Religion Communicators Council, the magazine won three awards of merit and an award of excellence for the photo "And God Saw That It Was Good" by Erik Johnson (June 2004).

It feels great to be recognized by other professionals in the arena of religious publishing, but what matters most is that the magazine serves you, our faithful readers. (The plaques *are* nice, though.)

This issue begins the new Bible study (see page 28). "Act Boldly in the Fruit of the Spirit" by the Rev. Sue Gamelin is based on Galatians 5:22-23, the apostle Paul's exhortation that we live by the Spirit, not the desires of the flesh. Before you look at the study, can you name the nine fruit of the Spirit? You'll be an expert by May! The study will show us how we can act boldly through our unique, God-given gifts.

Also starting in this issue are two new regular columns. "Health Wise" will bring you information and insight into some of the health issues that affect women most profoundly. "Praying for Peacemakers," our other new column, will feature one country on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle in each issue, with a spotlight on a woman (or women) who works for peace in that place. This is a great opportunity to learn about and support our sisters around the globe.

Finally, the overarching theme of this triennium for Women of the ELCA is "act boldly." It is our hope that *LWT* will encourage and energize you as you find and express your boldness in faith and as you live it out for the sake of God's world.

---

Kate Elliott is editor of *Lutheran Woman Today*.

---

*Lutheran Woman Today* (ISSN 0896-209X), a magazine for growth in faith and mission, is published 10 times a year by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in partnership with Augsburg Fortress (Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440). *Lutheran Woman Today* editorial offices are at 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4189. Copyright © 2005 Women of the ELCA. All rights reserved. Duplication in whole or in part in any form is prohibited without written permission from the publisher. Printed in U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn., and additional mailing offices. Annual subscriptions: \$12.00; outside North America add \$8 for postage. Single copies, \$2.50. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Lutheran Woman Today*, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730.

# Great Crowd of Witnesses

by Marj Leegard

**"SUCH A LARGE CROWD OF WITNESSES IS ALL AROUND US!" HEBREWS 12:1 (CEV)**

Do you ever feel surrounded? Crowded? Trampled on? We listen to the news, and even local media must deliver all the world's woes to us. They show us earthquakes, deadly waves of water, rapists and child molesters, family murder, mistreated children, strange diseases, dishonest executives. A crowd of troubles and worries. We can try to ignore the news, but it won't go away. And in the midst of this barrage of wrong and sorrow, we hear of searches for solutions: warning systems for deadly ocean waves, neighborhood lists of convicted sex offenders.

But what about our communion of saints, those who stand beside us as we run the race looking to Jesus? Perhaps we are not aware of them because we do not hear about them at noon, six, and ten. They are the anonymous throng.

In this throng is Harold. He is retired now and has moved from town back to the farm his grandparents called home; always his favorite place. He comes to the country church some Sundays, even though he has belonged to the church in town for 80 years. He is a happy, smiling man. You have been fed with the grain from his farm and the witness of your neighbor, Harold.

Russ is in that crowd of witnesses. He sits over on the right side toward the back of the church and wonders whether he should come back tomorrow and fix that rattling window. No rattles next Sunday, so we know Russ has been there. When his wife

died and we wondered how he would deal with the loneliness, he found a way. He goes to the nursing home and has coffee and cookies with the residents. This is not a maybe, sometime thing with Russ. He drives the seven miles every day. You cannot surround from a distance. He knows you have to be there.

Betty just can't stand to see two pieces of fabric that are not neatly trimmed and ready to be attached to each other. Little children in a shelter treasure something of their very own—a quilt to drag to a sunny spot for a nap. Betty makes baby quilts from new material and fills them with soft batting supplied by the neighbors who surround her. Delighted laughter rings out when colors come together in sudden beauty. Her witness surrounds chilled bodies with the warmth of caring.

Annie is studying both law and theology. Those slender shoulders bear a heavy load of all the hopes and dreams we have for a better world. In Annie, we will be surrounded by action fully grounded in faith. In her future, there will be hard work and disappointment, for change does not often come in a moment. She is not alone. The great crowds of witnesses surround her as they surround you.

How can we be threatened by the great crowd of trouble delivered by the news when surrounding us is this great throng of witnesses?

---

*LWT* columnist Marj Leegard and her husband, Jerome, live in Detroit Lakes, Minn.

# Lollipops, Literature, and Love

by Sally Ketchum

**I WRITE ABOUT CLASSIC LITERATURE AND LOLLIPOPS AND THEIR CONNECTION TO TEACHING CHILDREN TO** love courageously. The thought of acting boldly is ancient and it is new. It is one of those ideas that is timeless. The Bible records many instances of Christian courage—acts fueled by the love of God. But bold acts also appear in ancient classic literature. The Roman poet Virgil made the case for courageous action in battle with the famous words, “Fortune favors those who dare.” In the sacred sense of bravery, we might think not of Virgil but of God. We would replace “fortune” with “the Holy Spirit.” For Christians, it isn’t fortune that inspires us to bold acts—it is the Holy Spirit, taking the form of an inner urge, an internal courage that leads us to action.

This has everything to do with mothering because as parents we have the best chance to teach our children not only to love (and be loved), but also to act confidently, showing their affection and devotion. Acting boldly to show respect, care, and affection is a considered action that mothers can help instill in their children as they grow. How do we teach children to love, let alone to act boldly in its cause? Parents are strong role models, so we need to examine our own actions. To go from the sublime with Virgil to the ridiculous subject of lollipops, let me explain how I taught my own children about love. How my children handled the delightful dilemma of lollipops gave me insight into their

individual personalities and suggested what each one needed from me.

When my children were young, we lived in a neighborhood that had a very fine confectionery. This candy store sold bunches of six or seven lollipops wrapped in cellophane and tied with a rubber band. My first child, a boy with an attention deficiency, was friendly and outgoing. He would be so excited about the candy that he would give away all his lollipops and then realize that he had none for himself. My daughter, then precocious and self-centered, would pick out the one or two she liked best and give the rest to her friends. My younger son, intelligent, balanced, and loving, gave his lollipops to friends first and kept the last one for himself. What did this tell me about my children?

I saw that my older son needed to consider and control his affection for others, not act on impulse, generous though it was. He needed to slow down, think through his feelings, and act deliberately. I saw that my daughter needed to understand that love is selfless and to love her friends without restraint. I saw that my younger son needed to appreciate his gifts and build on them.

In my research on how to teach children to love, and also because I’m a mother, I have discovered some approaches parents can use to help children learn how to love appropriately. As soon as a child begins to show a natural appreciation of a playmate, a puppy, a parent, or a song, mothers

## AS PARENTS WE HAVE THE BEST CHANCE TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN NOT ONLY TO LOVE (AND BE LOVED), BUT ALSO TO ACT CONFIDENTLY, SHOWING THEIR AFFECTION AND DEVOTION.

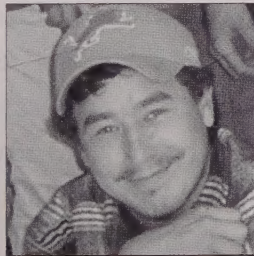
can draw out their child's emotions by asking questions. "What do you like about Taylor's hair?" "How does the puppy show us when he's happy?" "What did Daddy say that made you feel so good?" "Why is Billy your friend?" The simple words "what," "how," and "why" are natural ways to talk about love and its actions to your child.

Another way to illustrate love is to ask children to list things they like. Hang up the list so that they can see it and be reminded of the richness of their lives. Add to it as they discover new things to love. These practices show children that love is a powerful force in life.

One of my favorite lines from a prayer is "Oh, Christ . . . grant us power in our love." Children who are outgoing enough, even bold, can point out the different types of love between Snoopy and Charlie Brown in the comics, lend a strong voice to "What a friend we have in Jesus," and talk about Jesus with playmates. These are the children who, through their daring, shine in God's grace and peace.

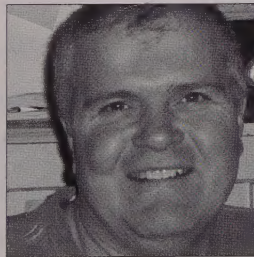
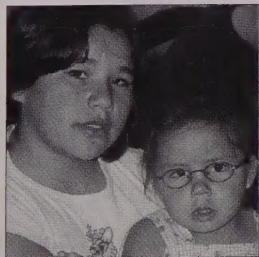
Sally Ketchum is a member of Zion Lutheran Church, Manistique, Mich., and the author of *Super Student/Happy Kid*. She may be reached at [ketchum@direcway.com](mailto:ketchum@direcway.com).

### VOLUNTEERS



TEENS

CHILDREN



PASTOR/PILOTS

# LAMP

New Haven, Michigan

L.A.M.P. – Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots Inc., Edmonton, Alberta

Email: [office@lampministry.org](mailto:office@lampministry.org) Phone: 1-800-307-4036

Web Site: [www.lampministry.org](http://www.lampministry.org)

*A cross-cultural ministry sharing Jesus Christ with God's people in remote areas of Canada.*

- ★ LAMP offers opportunities for volunteers to become involved in northern ministry as Vacation Bible School teachers and volunteers
- ★ and raises mission awareness in individuals and congregations.

*This ministry is made possible through the prayers, participation and financial support of groups and individuals throughout North America.*

We invite you to participate in our 35th anniversary by sending your gifts to **LAMP**

P.O. Box 480167, New Haven, MI 48048





## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

# Making a Difference

by Emily Hansen

**ROBIN SIMPSON FELT A GENTLE TUGGING TOWARD SEMINARY FOR MOST OF HER LIFE, BUT AT AGE 43,** the Baltimore native is now living into her calling. A single parent of two sons, Simpson is a cradle Lutheran who has served her home congregation, Peace Lutheran in Glen Burnie, Maryland, since she was eight years old. At 18, she became a deacon at the church.

"I had always intended to go to seminary following college," Simpson wrote when applying for a women's ordination scholarship from Women of the ELCA. "Each time I felt the gentle call, it just never seemed the right time for me to enter seminary."

In 2001, her sons encouraged her to quit her job as a public school teacher and start on the path toward ordained ministry. She said her pastor, family, fellow church members, and God affirmed the call. And so did the scholarship committee of Women of the ELCA, who met in April and chose the recipients for the 2005-2006

academic year. Simpson is now in her final year at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Thanks to your donations, Simpson is among 35 women receiving a total of \$30,000 through seven scholarship categories. Your gifts are helping bold women accept their calls to serve the church. The scholarship program is just one way Women of the ELCA carries out its purpose statement to affirm and support women's gifts and growth.

The scholarships support a diverse group of women, including second-career students, seminarians, women college faculty, and professional women on the road to career advancement. These women represent various fields of study such as lay ministry, ordination, child development, social work, health sciences, and teaching. Some are in their undergraduate work, others will attend their final year of seminary, and some graduated from high school ten or more years ago

and are just now beginning their higher education.

Simpson said she hopes to be a parish pastor in an urban area so she can use the skills she's learned as a teacher and as an intern at Luther Place in Washington, D.C.

### FUNDS AND RECIPIENTS

#### **Academic Leadership Scholarship supported by the Schmieder Fund**

Assists in the development of senior women faculty and/or staff leadership at ELCA colleges and seminaries in the United States.

Marjorie Hass, Allentown, Pa.

Simona Hill, Selinsgrove, Pa.

Jaciel Keltgen, Sioux Falls, S.D.

#### **Administrative Leadership Scholarship supported by the Arne Fund**

Provides assistance to women interested in reaching the top of their field as an administrator.

Joyce Caldwell, Cedarsburg, Wis.

#### **Ordained Ministry Scholarship supported by the Chilstrom Fund**

Assists women who are second-

career students at ELCA seminars preparing for ordained ministry in ELCA congregations.

Maria Hammons, Warwick, R.I.  
Betty Landis, Gettysburg, Pa.  
Robin Simpson, Glen Burnie, Md.

### **Laywomen Opportunity Scholarship supported by the Belmer Fund and Flora Prince Memorial Fund**

Assists women studying for ELCA service abroad.

Beth Elness-Hanson,  
Bellevue, Wash.

### **Laywomen Opportunity Scholarship supported by the Drinkhall Franke / Seeley Knudstrup Scholarship Fund**

Assists mature ELCA laywomen preparing for an occupation in Christian service through a graduate course of study.

Shannon Finger, Helenville, Wis.  
Lynn Fry, Chambersburg, Pa.

### **Laywomen Opportunity Scholarship supported by the Amelia Kemp Fund**

Assists mature ELCA women of color in undergraduate, graduate, professional, or vocational courses of study.

Sally Sims, Detroit, Mich.

### **Laywomen Opportunity Scholarships supported by Cronk, First Triennium Board, General, Mehring, Paepke, Piero/Wade and Edwin/Edna Robeck Funds.**

Assists ELCA laywomen in undergraduate, graduate, professional, or vocational studies.

Victoria Brouwer,  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Betsy Carlson, Chicago, Ill.  
Rebecca Castello, Toledo, Ohio  
Kristen Corbell, Durham, N.C.  
Rhonda Douglass,  
Charlotte, N.C.

Lynn Egesdal, Newell, Iowa

Kathy Engh, Spokane, Wash.  
Janet Field, Albuquerque, N.M.  
Ann Gillen, Kearney, Neb.  
Mary Eileen Hahn,  
Mt. Airy, Md.  
Lynn Hofstad, Berkeley, Calif.  
Jacquelyn Kimball,  
Gig Harbor, Wash.

Jennifer Markgren, Osseo, Wis.  
Nicole Mitchell, Pacifica, Calif.  
Jessica Oestmann, Cushing, Okla.  
Lois Olson, Glenham, S.D.  
Joyce Pencek, Allentown, Pa.  
Sarah Reimer, Hayward, Calif.  
Lynda Seer, Saukville, Wis.  
Catherine Smith,  
Fort Wayne, Ind.  
Patricia Smith,  
Surfside Beach, S.C.  
Leslie Whited Vance,  
Kaysville, Utah

---

**Emily Hansen is associate for programs, Women of the ELCA.**



### **God Is For Every Day™** *Stories and Songs for Children*

One of the best gifts that you give your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews is a spiritual one.

Children will learn about the experience of including God in every single day of their lives through the following eight themes, which are presented to them through stories and songs.

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Jesus is my Friend  | God Loves the Animals! |
| Lord, I'm So Grumpy | Baby Names             |
| Rejoice in IT!      | The Offering Song      |
| The Best Gifts      | Grains of Sand         |

*The book includes piano music, song lyrics, guitar chords, stories with introductions, as well as review questions and a sheet of God Is For Every Day stickers.*

*JoySoul Corporation*  
*Bringing joy to others through Word and Song*

Book/CD  
\$24.99  
Book/Tape  
\$21.99  
Compact Disc  
(CD)  
\$12.99  
Cassette Tape  
\$8.99  
Bib \$10.75  
Caps \$13.75 or  
2 for \$26.00  
Shipping  
is \$1.75

PO Box 71, Lisbon ND 58054-0071  
Toll-free phone: 1-866-569-8486 E-mail: Carol@JoySoul.com Web Site: www.JoySoul.com



♥ We enjoy personalizing your book with a picture of your dear one(s)! ♥



by Anne Basye

## GOD 101: Covering the Basics

**WE'RE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD**, my son learned throughout his religious education. Then senior year arrived, and Alex discovered that while God loved him, the colleges of his choice felt differently. Rejected or placed on a wait list by five selective colleges, Alex found it hard to hang on to his sense of self.

*Alex: I'm on the edge of being nobody at all. All of the people around me at school are gaining new identities, new ways of describing themselves, simply with school names. I still can't participate when a well-intentioned adult asks, "So, where are you going to college?" According to society, the first step toward success is a college education. But not everyone can be—or even has to be—highly educated. Suddenly, I see the possibility of falling into that other half. Only those who had high expectations for me would notice, but they would forget. No one would bat an eye that some kid didn't get into college.*

Last September, we were confident. Alex was a great kid: good grades, great test scores, engaged in lots of interesting activities. In short, a son to be proud of. I figured that several good colleges would be glad to accept him and offer us money, too!

In April—after all the essays were written, recommendations and transcripts collected, and applications dispatched—a series of thin envelopes began to arrive.

"I am sorry to tell you that . . ."

"An increase in applications made admission extremely selective. As a result . . ."

"We wish you success in your educational endeavors."

The shock was enormous. I realized, then, that neither one of us had much experience with being passed over. Except for school sports teams, I have almost always been chosen—for college, jobs, and committees. Alex, too, has always had the sense that when his hand is raised, he'll be picked.

*All those people know me and say, "Gee, Alex, I know you are a good student, I know your transcript, and you deserve to go to a good school." It's very personal. But when you send out an application, the whole system suddenly becomes impersonal. It's just a lot of people looking at a lot of names. Where is God in that?*



Alex Basye and mother, Anne Basye

That's a new question for us. God has seemed present in Alex's life from the beginning, when our pastor held him and said, "Alexander Frank, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." Welcomed into a community of people who accepted, loved, and cheered him on, Alex was a child of God, no matter what.

Until now. The incessant *no* from colleges seems to have trumped his baptismal identity and mine. Instead of remembering our inherent value in God's eyes, I've been listening to a little voice that's whispering: "Maybe you blew it."

### EMPHASIS ON ACHIEVEMENT

As parents in the 1970s, my mother and father contended with long hair, changing city schools, and some teenage escapades that simply weren't legal. Achievement was important, but survival mattered more. That decade's dangers brought down some of our friends, but my siblings and I made it. We emerged from those times as writers, artists, and teachers who value creativity and intellect more than our paychecks.

When power suits overtook bellbottoms and success morphed into materialism, parents got pushier. In the 1980s, I watched my younger cousins leave public school for boarding school and then set out for prestigious East Coast colleges to gain credentials in law and business.

The new emphasis on achievement was clearly pointed out by my cousin who said about a lesser-achieving sibling: “If he can’t get into a good undergraduate program, he can’t get into a good graduate program, and if he can’t get into a good graduate school, it’s all over.”

All over? Back then, I was appalled. How could someone be dismissed so easily and “good” defined so narrowly? As a young mom, I knew that when Alex reached college age, my attitudes would be broader and more life-giving. I would love and accept Alex as he was. I’d make our home a loving haven from a world that demands from us every day: “Prove it!”

I succeeded. Although my loved child of God turned out to be a pretty good student, he preferred working in an ice cream parlor and playing Hacky Sack to studying for SAT prep classes and participating in college application-enhancing activities.

But was I wrong? In pushing less, have I let him down? Is it already—just like my cousin said—all over?

I first flirted with that thought—thinking it was all over for me—when I was about thirty and read a feature story about a young woman with a dream job. Her years at elite private schools and colleges had obviously groomed her for this incredible opportunity, and I wondered: “What would my life be like if my parents had made different decisions about my education?”

Then, a few years later, I went through a phase where I wrestled daily with the question, “Am I

an overachiever or a slacker?” I remember those moments of anxiety and self-assessment when Alex tells me how he feels.

*When I go to bed at night, I think, “What did I do today?” Often I can’t remember, but I don’t have a sense of accomplishment. I didn’t finish a big paper, I didn’t shoot a good game of pool—and I didn’t get into college. That one feels the worst. I don’t have the confidence now to finish anything because of this huge loose end. Getting accepted would bring closure, so that everything could come together finally.*

### WHERE IS GOD IN THAT?

I have a confession: When I agreed to write this article a year ago, I had something light in mind. Like a family Christmas letter, it would be heavy on triumph with a tense moment or two thrown in for modesty. I’d do some saber rattling about a process that sorts and labels teens, and I’d be compassionate about those who were rejected. These would, of course, be other people’s children.

I would insist that all kids were equal—while secretly believing that my child was just a little more equal than everyone else’s. And it would be easy to talk about baptismal identity as an alternative to the harsh ways the world defines us because Alex’s identity as an up-and-coming scholar—and mine as his mother—would be secure.

In my wildest dreams I never imagined we’d find ourselves among the excluded, or that we’d feel so really, truly terrible. And that I’d have to write about it, exposing my feelings to readers.

It’s been an embarrassing assignment, but I’m grateful. Working together on this article has meant that Alex and I have put in lots of hours talking about what has happened, how we feel, and what it means—at a time when each of us would rather sulk alone. We’ve grappled with everything from anger and disbelief to

shame and resignation to quiet hope. As we've tackled Alex's question, "Where is God in that?" we've gone down deep and really thought about who we are.

I wish I could say that our sense of self is solidly embedded in our baptisms. I wish I could say that above the clamor of the world, we hear God clearly saying: "Never mind college. You and Alex are both loved, wildly and unconditionally." But I'm too busy trying to figure out what this crisis is teaching me about my own insecurities about achievement. And the voice Alex is listening for belongs to a college admissions officer, not God.

*I can't just sit by and mourn my lack of success. I need to get up and try again. Someone will say yes. Somewhere, a door will open, and I will have an opportunity.*

College may be uncertain, but it's not "all over" for Alex. If Plan A for college doesn't work out, Plans B and C are on the drawing board. Alex's life is really just beginning.

Yes, I pushed a lot less than my friend whose son was just named a National Merit Scholar. But the basics were covered when Alex was baptized. And while God's voice may be faint, the whisper assures me that God is here. My son and I may have questions about our value in the eyes of the world, but not our worth to God.

---

Anne Basye is associate director for Global Resources, ELCA Division for Global Mission, and a member of Unity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.



NEED A BAPTISM OR BIRTHDAY GIFT?  
HERE'S ONE THAT'S GUARANTEED TO FIT.

How many gifts for kids are the perfect size now and grow right along with them? A MissionFuture4KIDZ investment fits the bill. It's the ideal gift to celebrate baptisms, birthdays, graduations or Christmas. All it takes to open a MissionFuture4KIDZ investment is \$50, and additions of \$50 can be made at any time. It's an excellent way to save for college. It's also a great way to help children feel connected with the Lutheran church and understand financial responsibility. To open a MissionFuture4KIDZ investment, call 877.886.3522 or e-mail [mif@elca.org](mailto:mif@elca.org).

877.886.3522



[www.elca.org/mif](http://www.elca.org/mif)

Mission Investments are securities that are sold only by means of the Offering Circular which can be obtained from the Mission Investment Fund. Mission investments are subject to certain risks. See "Risk Factors" following the introduction in the Offering Circular. As securities issued by a non-profit institution, the investments offered by the Mission Investment Fund are not insured by FDIC, SIPC or any federal or state regulatory agency. This is neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation to buy the investments described.



HEALTH WISE

# Is Sexism Hazardous to Your Health?

by Molly M. Ginty

WHATEVER STAGE OF LIFE YOU'RE IN, AND WHETHER YOU'RE PHYSICALLY FIT OR LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS, YOU CAN FIND WAYS TO BE A WISE STEWARD OF YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. OUR HEALTH AND WHOLENESS ARE IMPORTANT KEYS TO RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL FOR US AND ACTING BOLDLY ON THAT CALL. THAT'S WHY WOMEN OF THE ELCA HAVE EMBARKED ON A NEW HEALTH INITIATIVE FOR THE 2005-2008 TRIENNIAL: RAISING UP HEALTHY WOMEN AND GIRLS. THIS ONGOING COLUMN REPRESENTS OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH.

---

Carolyn Warner nearly died of her doctors' ignorance. In August 1997, she was driving on the freeway when she suddenly felt a tingling in her arms and shortness of breath. She got off at the next exit, pulled in at a hotel, and called for help. The emergency room doctors shrugged off her symptoms as mere anxiety. But when she visited a cardiologist two weeks later, she discovered that she had a 98 percent blockage in her right coronary artery and needed immediate surgery.

"I continued having cardiac events that required emergency attention," says Warner, 60, a food industry consultant in Upland, California. "But three more times, medical providers failed to recognize my symptoms, which are less dramatic in women than in men. Paramedics and doctors continued telling me I had anxiety—even though I eventually had a heart attack and had to have triple bypass surgery."

Warner (who had a family history of heart disease, but whose doctors never monitored her) is just one example of how the American health care

system can fail women. Medical schools often do not teach their students about health problems unique to women, so physicians might not recognize them in their female patients. Because most health research, including drug testing, is conducted on men, gender differences are not always tracked in the first place.

Heart disease, the number one killer of women in the United States, is a good example of this gender gap. Two-thirds of its female victims die with no previously recognized symptoms, though heart disease is largely preventable. Health experts say part of the problem is doctors' lack of awareness. That's confirmed by a recent Gallup poll that revealed 88 percent of primary-care physicians are unaware that women's heart disease symptoms differ from men's.

Plaque that builds up in the arteries of women is likely to be softer and more diffuse than it is in men. If women have blockage, it is usually found in the smaller, often overlooked branches, not the major arteries.

“During heart attacks, women tend to have pain in the upper abdomen instead of the chest and to have more secondary symptoms like sweating, fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath,” says Dr. Marianne J. Legato, chair of the Partnership for Gender-Specific Medicine at Columbia University in New York. “Women also tend to have heart attacks ten years later than men, around age sixty.”

According to the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease in Washington, D.C., women account for only 36 percent of open-heart surgeries and 25 percent of heart research subjects. Women are less likely to receive medication after their first heart attack, and so are more likely to die of heart disease.

The good news for women with heart disease and other illnesses is that medical experts have started to focus more on their specific needs. Gender-specific medicine, one of the hottest fields in health care, is discovering that gender makes a difference, not just in heart disease, but in many other conditions.

In some cases, these gender-specific health differences give women an edge. Estrogen helps protect women from pancreatic cancer. Stronger immune systems help women fight infections more effectively. And across the globe, women consistently outlive men by an average of six years.

In other cases, being female can pose health hazards. Because women’s lungs are more susceptible to carcinogens, women who smoke are more likely to get lung cancer than men. Women are at higher risk for gallstones (crystals in the gall bladder), osteoporosis (thinning of bones), and multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus (all three autoimmune diseases). “Studies also show that women are two to nine times more likely than men to contract HIV, the AIDS virus, after unprotected heterosexual sex with an infected partner,” says Dr. Mary A. Young of the Center

for Sex Differences at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

To help women beat the odds, health advocates are developing gender-specific diagnostic tools, such as ultrasound machines that can detect their more subtle symptoms of heart disease. They are altering dosage recommendations for medications, reducing dosages for women because they tend to be of lighter weight than men. To save more women’s lives, advocates are working to improve awareness, screening, research, and treatment.

Medical experts also are urging women to speak out and become stronger advocates for their own health. “Research shows that doctors often attribute women’s symptoms to emotional disturbance, particularly when it comes to heart attack symptoms, chest pain, or shortness of breath,” says Dr. Legato. “That’s why it’s important to be straightforward with your doctor. Never downplay your illnesses, and never assume you are imagining your symptoms.”

---

Molly M. Ginty lives in New York. Her work has appeared in *Ms.*, *Marie Claire*, *Redbook*, and *Women’s eNews*.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Institutes of Health  
Office of Research on Women’s Health  
[www4.od.nih.gov/orwh/](http://www4.od.nih.gov/orwh/)

To learn about ELCA resources for health and wellness, go to [www.elcaforwellness.org](http://www.elcaforwellness.org).

*Eve’s Rib: The New Science of Gender-Specific Medicine and How It Can Save Your Life* by Marianne Legato, M.D.

# UNMASKING THE MEATLOAF CONTROVERSY

by Linda Luke

"IF IT IS POSSIBLE, SO FAR AS IT DEPENDS ON YOU, LIVE PEACEABLY WITH ALL." ROMANS 12:18

**We all experience conflict from time to time,** in our homes, our communities, and even in our churches. What matters is how we deal with it. We can learn skills that can help us better "live peaceably with all." Resolving conflicts—large or small—calls for a cool head and an understanding of what lies beneath. Whether the disagreement is among family members or countries, rules of negotiation follow similar guidelines: listen, acknowledge or apologize, and communicate. Two stories demonstrate that resolving conflict—from a kitchen-table spat about meatloaf to an international crisis—can require effort, prayerful consideration, and the help of the Holy Spirit.

## THE MEATLOAF FIGHT

Peter had brought paperwork home from the office one weekend and was working at the kitchen table on a Sunday afternoon. Maggie asked him what time he would be done so she would know when she should put the meatloaf into the oven. “I hate meatloaf,” Peter snapped. “I don’t want meatloaf. I’ll go out and eat. Make it whenever you want.”

Last time I made meatloaf, he loved it, Maggie thought, and mentally began to defend herself and her meatloaf. Although our story is about a couple in a traditional situation, conflicts like these can come up in all forms of households and between various family members. Peter’s angry response to Maggie’s dinner menu probably has nothing to do with Maggie. Anger can be deceptive, like a Halloween mask. It can serve to cover other feelings that are more difficult to bring up, even to oneself. Many people find it easier to express anxiety or anger, for example, than to face or express other, deeper emotions.

Often when an emotional response to a question or remark is out of proportion, the real issue is not the meatloaf. The issue might be that Peter feels disrespected or abandoned. Peter doesn’t care about Maggie’s delicious meatloaf when

he is feeling bad about himself. For reasons unknown to Maggie and perhaps even to Peter himself, he feels invisible, taken for granted, and victimized, and he is covering this with defensive anger. Maybe it has something to do with his job and the work he is doing at the kitchen table. But Maggie doesn’t know why he reacted as he did, and her response can make the situation either a lot better or a lot worse.

If Maggie chooses to answer Peter’s outburst with defensive anger of her own, then two people will be angry at the same time. One of the ground rules in labor relations and high-conflict negotiations is that only one party can be angry at a time. The other party must retreat until the angry party has cooled off. This is a useful rule for families, too.

## RETREAT RESPECTFULLY

You should retreat if you feel defensive, and it is imperative to do so if you feel that your safety is at risk. If you retreat because you are angry (not because you feel physically or emotionally threatened), it helps to make a respectful comment before leaving. For example, Maggie might say, “I love you, honey, but I can’t speak with you right now about this. I will come back and talk to you when we are both calmer.”

After retreating from conflict, people must get back together to resolve it. Otherwise, the conflict is not resolved and will keep resurfacing in other ways. Maggie’s comment to Peter reassures him that she loves him and gives both of them a little breathing space.

When a person is in an emotional upheaval, as Peter is, he might feel powerless, invisible, and unable to take control of his environment or his emotions. It is very difficult to shift immediately into problem-solving from such a position; the transaction takes a little time.

## LISTEN ACTIVELY

After retreating respectfully and both parties calm down, it is time to come back together and begin listening actively. This is when you question and summarize, encouraging the angry person to talk about why they are angry. As you listen and summarize, you can ask them to name the emotions that surfaced. Helping someone identify their feelings—bringing these emotions to the forefront—might result in grief, but ultimately, it should resolve the anger. Maggie might say to Peter, “It seems to me that you’re feeling left out or isolated in some way. Am I reading that right?”

At this point, the angry person might be loaded with demands. Sometimes only God could meet these demands. A spouse, partner, family member, or friend probably cannot. It might feel as if this demand stage will never end, but it will, and the angry person begins to calm down. Only then can the demands can be sorted—into those demands that something can be done about, and those demands that nothing can be done about and need to be let go, without resentment and with forgiveness.

### APOLOGIZE OR ACKNOWLEDGE

The conflict might indeed have something to do with Maggie. Perhaps Peter is angry because she left a banana in their car, and when he took a business associate to lunch, the car smelled like a fermentation tank. Maggie can apologize, offer to have the car cleaned, and promise to make every effort not to do that again.

Or his anxiety could stem from a more serious issue, such as worries about his business or a sick relative. If the conflict is between Maggie and Peter, they should find a solution that will increase their trust in each other. If the difficulty comes from outside their relationship, Maggie can

continue to acknowledge Peter's feelings until he can determine what must be done about the situation. She does not offer solutions and allows Peter to resolve the issue on his own, thereby restoring his self-respect and self-confidence.

Peter may think that he and Maggie have worked out their differences and have found a great way to communicate, but Maggie might be wondering if Peter will do the same for her when she is fearful or angry. Traditionally, men's listening techniques are more about problem solving, not supportive silence. Maggie must be clear in asking Peter to listen to her, not offering solutions unless she asks for them. Mutual respect and love grow from the empathy created by listening to partners or friends describe their feelings.

### MAKING PEACE

The techniques used by Peter and Maggie are the same used in international peacemaking. Lucille "Sis" Levin took the peacekeeping skills she learned after growing up in a dysfunctional family to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in the 1980s. Now she is a peace educator and certified professional mediator, but she grew up with an alcoholic

mother and a controlling father in a conservative Christian family in Birmingham, Alabama. Because of her family history, she learned to recognize and deal with dysfunction in communication. Sis attracted international attention in the mid-1980s because of her nonviolent reconciliation efforts to get her journalist husband released from foreign captors.

On March 7, 1984, Jerry Levin, Middle East bureau chief for CNN, was taken hostage by Islamic extremists in Beirut, Lebanon. Later, another group of American hostages, including Terry Anderson, was captured by Shiite Hezbollah supporters in an attempt to drive U.S. forces from Lebanon.

The U.S. Secret Service urged "quiet diplomacy" after Jerry was taken hostage. Believing that he was still alive, they told Sis that her husband might be killed if she went to the media, and the silence continued for a year. In July 1984, the terrorists sent audio- and videotapes of Jerry to CNN. The terrorists identified themselves and presented their demands, but the silence on America's side continued. Sis found it a familiar silence, like that of a dysfunctional family. She compared the Middle East conflict to the story told in

Genesis—a family conflict, much like the biblical arguments of Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac. And the United States had joined in this family argument too.

## BREAKING THE SILENCE

Sis realized that the first step in ending the cycle of conflict was to break the silence. She knew she needed to put herself in the shoes of the Middle Eastern people, to listen to and understand their situation. To do that, she needed to go there and communicate with both Jews and Arabs to try to understand them. She networked and visited communities. She met secretly with leaders in Syria, asking for help, always identifying herself as the wife of a hostage. Sis listened to understand, withheld the assessment of fault, and learned to love her enemy. She discovered on her pilgrimage that all people are children of God. All are members of one family.

## ACKNOWLEDGING WRONGDOING

She called for all parties involved in her husband's captivity to acknowledge their wrongdoing: The Israeli government had put Palestinians in concentration camps with raw sewage; a Lebanese Christian army had massacred hun-

dreds of women and children in refugee camps; and a U.S. warship inadvertently hit a schoolhouse when it fired toward land. There were no innocent parties.

## TALKING ABOUT IT

The third step in negotiation, Sis says, is setting up a dialogue between the parties in conflict. All involved must look for a solution. The members of the family must come to the table to talk, confess (but not blame), and agree on practical options.

Sis did her part by tirelessly communicating to her husband's captors and setting up networks for peace. At about this time, Jerry's captors began to allow him nutritious food, warm blankets, and exercise. Before then, he had been chained to a radiator for months. When he had regained strength, he was allowed to escape the chains and flee through an open window. He walked for two hours to Syria where he was greeted, fed, cared for, and returned home in February 1985. He was the first of many hostages to be released.

Sis and Jerry continued their efforts to assist in the release of the other hostages. It would take eight more years before the final hostage in Lebanon, Terry

Anderson, was released. Jerry and Sis are currently involved in projects promoting nonviolence to create a more stable peacemaking environment in the Holy Land and elsewhere in the Middle East.

When Sis began her efforts to get her husband released, she had hardly any skills in negotiation, but she felt called by God to work toward the peaceful release of her husband and other hostages. She heard the call and she went. "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit" (Luke 12:35).

By God's grace, like Sis, we all have the potential to be peacemakers—in our homes, communities, churches, and in the world.

---

Linda Luke is an attorney and attends Christ Lutheran Church in Visalia, California. She is soon to complete a master's degree in peacemaking and conflict management at Fresno Pacific University, a Mennonite institution in Fresno, California. She lives with her husband Jim. She has two daughters and three granddaughters. Her husband says that except for him, everyone in the family is female, including the fish. He jokes that he feels outnumbered.

# THE BENEFITS OF SHOPPING

by Brenda Meier

Juanita Amigo loves her work. She is one of forty artisans working in a workshop in the Philippines run by Social Action Foundation for Filipino Youth (SAFFY). The love she puts into her work is evident in a new Women of the ELCA product introduced at this summer's Triennial Gathering.

Juanita puts the finishing touches on a candle holder with capiz-shell petals radiating from a brass base to form the water lily symbol of Women of the ELCA. She is responsible for dusting the soldered-wire edges with gold dust.

The water lily candle holder and five more signature items for Women of the ELCA were made

in cooperation with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and A Greater Gift (the handcraft program of SERRV International, a nonprofit alternative trade organization). Lutheran World Relief and SERRV have been partners since the 1999 launch of the LWR Handcraft Project (see sidebar opposite).

Like the products featured in the LWR Handcraft Project, the new Women of the ELCA items are created by artisans living in impoverished regions of the world who rely on income from their handcrafts to feed their families, educate their children, and acquire medical care. In the Philippines, rice farmers are losing their livelihoods because of the importa-

tion of cheaper rice, which makes income from handcraft production even more important.

"The economic situation facing many people in developing countries is becoming increasingly difficult. Half of the world lives on less than \$2 a day," says Serena Sato, marketing coordinator for A Greater Gift. Serena works closely with Lutheran World Relief in promoting fair trade through the LWR Handcraft Project. "It is especially difficult for women to find work that enables them to care for their families. Like mothers everywhere, women in developing countries want to provide homes, food, education,



and health care for their children," she says.

Handcrafts can be made in women's homes while they cook, care for children, tend to livestock, or walk between chores. Others make crafts in small workshops that offer child care, companionship with other artisans, and use of equipment.

In addition to wages, artisans may also receive skills and literacy training, access to basic health care, low-interest loans, or credit. Their cooperatives also invest in community development projects such as sponsoring public forums on topics ranging from women's rights to nutrition, and building safe water wells to funding elementary schools.

In Guatemala, where about half of its nearly 12 million citizens live in poverty, members of

UPAVIM, an artisan cooperative whose name means "united to live better," are contributing significantly to their community with the income from their handcrafts, including prayer cloths produced especially for Women of the ELCA.

"The artisan project at UPAVIM pays 100 percent of the costs for a Montessori elementary school for 60 children and provides funds for school scholarships," says Angela Bailon, president of UPAVIM. "In a really good year, we can give 625 scholarships to children in our *barrio* (neighborhood) of La Esperanza."

The creation of the handcrafts for Women of the ELCA is part of their continued efforts with Lutheran World Relief to support fair trade artisans and their communities. "Women of the ELCA have long been sup-

portive of LWR's fair trade work," says Kathryn Wolford, LWR president. "They see fair trade as a way to express their faith through their consumer choices. They also recognize the love that goes into these skillfully made handcrafts and are drawn to the beauty that creates."

The new Women of the ELCA handcrafts are available exclusively from Augsburg Fortress. For order information, see the Women of the ELCA spring catalog. To purchase other fairly traded handcrafts through the LWR Handcraft Project, call 888-294-9660 or visit [www.lwr.org/handcraft](http://www.lwr.org/handcraft).

---

Brenda Meier is the communication associate for parish projects and partnerships at Lutheran World Relief in Baltimore, Maryland. She directs the LWR Handcraft Project.

## THE LWR HANDCRAFT PROJECT: GIFTS THAT MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Since 1999, Lutherans have provided thousands of artisans around the world with vital income through their participation in the LWR Handcraft Project.

By gift giving or personal shopping through the LWR Handcraft Project, you ensure that the artisans are paid fairly and treated with respect. Your purchase demonstrates your belief that the artisans who craft the items are God's children whom we are called to love and care for.

Hosting an LWR Fair Trade Fair in your parish or community brings a variety of handcrafts to you and demonstrates your commitment to economic justice. Artisans benefit from the sale of their crafts when you introduce fair trade to a broader audience of people who care about the artisans' well-being.

Participation in the LWR Handcraft Project gives added benefit as well, because A Greater Gift donates ten percent of all sales through the LWR Handcraft Project—whether personal catalog orders or sales through LWR Fair Trade Fairs—to LWR to support its partners and projects overseas.

To learn more, call 888-294-9660 or visit [www.lwr.org/handcraft](http://www.lwr.org/handcraft).



# TRANSFORMATION ONE FOOT AT A TIME

This Maundy Thursday at the day center is profoundly different from any Maundy Thursday liturgy I have ever experienced before. It all begins when a young man, one of our homeless guests, who is scheduled to serve at the altar and assist with the foot washing, arrives on crutches and with filthy feet. He looks at me sadly and says, "I really want to participate, but I'm embarrassed; my feet are dirty and I can't reach them because of this cast." Distracted by the busyness of preparing for worship in the midst of the constant commotion in the center, I miss his point entirely, telling him it will be okay and to please vest. He leaves my office and goes out to the main room where all the social activities take place each day.

Probably ten minutes later he returns, smiling, and says simply, "One of the guys washed my feet for me." He vests, now ready to serve. I am hauntingly aware that two homeless men who have never been to a Maundy Thursday liturgy know more about its meaning than I do. They know the real thing, this washing a friend's feet.

The liturgy begins. When the time comes for the ceremonial foot-washing, we set chairs in front of our table-turned-altar, signaling the few we expect to come forward for the traditional rite. As the pastor, I am to kneel in front of each person and wash each one, foot by foot, reversing the usual liturgical hierarchy. Accustomed to standing close to the altar in a position of authority, I am to become servant to everyone else.

The people do not understand. What value is there in the pastor washing a few clean feet? Quietly the tiny congregation, joined by some who have been observing from a distance, begins to form a circle with all the chairs, then widens it, chair by chair, until the congregation has nearly tripled, from ten or so to nearly thirty. Shoes and socks begin to come off. Several of our volunteers have joined the circle, along with more of our homeless guests.

They all want to be part of something they instinctively perceive as holy, truly touched by God. The liturgy is transformed. I kneel in front of the person to

my right and wash his feet. Then he kneels before the person to his right and washes her feet. They continue around the circle, volunteers, guests, and ministers all mixed together. Feet unprepared, in various stages of cleanliness, we really wash one another. When the person to my left washes my feet, we are done. We remain silent. Having been mutually vulnerable, serving one another, we continue to experience the presence of Christ. Together, we know the power of the Holy Spirit in worship. Our hearts are transformed by it. Together, we are anointed into new ministry, all in a moment.

## RECEIVING

The purpose of worship is to give thanks to God. Because of the nature of God, the way we do that is to open ourselves to receive God's love. That is hard for us, for we like to see ourselves primarily as givers. Our pattern must be to receive from God, *then* give God thanks.

That's what happened that Maundy Thursday. We were opened

to receiving through two significant events. First, we were prepared to be washed, not by careful training in the liturgy, but by the unselfish exchange between two men before the liturgy. Everyone knew that a man had washed his friend's feet so he would fit in. Those two men made footwashing an acceptable thing; more than that, in their action God revealed footwashing as a *necessary* thing, loving and Christ-like. Referring to Jesus' washing the disciples' feet, Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* says, "Some people do a certain thing and the way in which they do it hallows that thing forever afterwards. It may be a most commonplace thing, but after we have seen them do it, it becomes different. When the Lord does a thing through us, He always transfigures it." From Jesus' original action, through the two men's ordinary sharing, and on into our liturgy, Christ transformed footwashing and us.

Second, the people were confident enough to act humbly on what their hearts were saying to them. They were not afraid to speak. That circle formed as confidently and quietly and gently as could happen only with the guidance of God. The people had something to say and they said it effectively. They fully participated in the action

of the Holy Spirit among us, and somehow, we listened.

There's a third element: Footwashing as mutual ministry is grounded in Scripture. At the Passover meal just before his arrest, Jesus gets up from the table, washes the disciples' feet, wipes them with a towel, returns to the table, and says, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Obey me, he says, and you will learn to "love one another" (13:34). I wonder if Jesus understands the impact of his action because of what he himself had received a little earlier. Jesus was eating dinner at Lazarus' home when "Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair." Jesus said then it was preparation for his burial; in Luke he said it was about hospitality and forgiveness (Luke 7:38). The point is that Jesus knew the humility of having his bare feet anointed by another out of love. He knew what his disciples—and we—would feel, receiving the cleansing touch of another. We would feel loved.

Our little congregation represented all levels of economic well-being, several races and ethnicities, and a variety of church denomina-

tions, and none of us was better than the other. Although some of us had more formal education about the liturgy, we were the ones being taught, kindly and compassionately, by those who knew Jesus on the street. The guests of the center were as gentle in their teaching as we were in awe in our learning. None of us will fear our commonality in the presence of God again, a clear first step toward making a difference in a world where dissimilarity breeds distrust.

## SURRENDERING

Sadly, even though Jesus shows us how, we resist receiving as a way of life. We have adopted one line in Scripture, Paul's quotation of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), and forgotten entirely to keep it in balance. Ask your friends whether they prefer to be the giver or receiver in a relationship, and a very large percentage will proudly proclaim "giver." Taken to its extreme, that can be an example of idolatry, of wanting to be God. The giver can quickly become the controller, the one to whom all the receivers are indebted. Because we are not God, and we do sin, giving without receiving is destructive, both of others and ourselves. In fact, we deny

others the opportunity to give when we insist on being the “generous” one all the time.

Receiving on its own is equally harmful; insecurity and greed are the obvious culprits. And yet, for us, the cycle must begin by receiving from the loving God who gives from utter generosity in love, not from any need to control. Jesus reveals the truth to us, for he knows to ask when he wants help (asking Peter, James, and John to stay with him in the garden, asking those fishermen to follow and serve with him). We see him repeatedly surrendering himself to his Father, and in that surrender we find our guidance.

When we surrender to God all our confusion about when to give and when to receive, we will begin to find the balance. Then, rather than holding tightly to the familiar in our worship, let us surrender our liturgies to God, open our hearts to receiving God’s guidance, and see who comes to join us, bringing new life.

## CHANGING

Once we surrender, we will easily discover some ways (less dramatic than washing dirty feet) to open up our liturgy. Just as the secular (washing a friend’s dirty feet)

and the sacred (ceremonial foot-washing) were made one on that Maundy Thursday, our offertory time also could benefit by intentionally connecting symbolic act with real need. When we listen to a beautiful anthem while putting our pledge money in a plate, we are doing lovely and good things. But unless there is additional impact, calling us to more, it is incomplete. It is entirely different when we realize that the people carrying the gifts to the altar symbolize our self-offering for the work of Christ. Further, when they carry a large basket filled with our donations for the local food pantry, we can see the relationship. I remember several congregations so moved by that symbolic action that they became curious about who comes to the food pantry. Before long, several members were volunteering in pantries; in some cases, entire outreach programs evolved from that simple act.

Further, we can increase our hospitality toward people who come to worship with us. Hospitality is more than a pleasant smile during the exchange of the peace or making space available for meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and other service groups. Surrendered to God, hospitality is truly receiving people in the

name of Christ. It is invitational, with a willingness to risk being affected by every person who enters our worship space. It means reaching beyond the familiar to embrace the unfamiliar. People who are comparatively new to a congregation could be welcomed into roles of liturgical leadership early on; that simple act says, “We know Christ brings you here. We want to learn from you.” And that is how mutuality in ministry really begins. Of course, the deeper question is, “Do we want to be changed by those who come to worship with us?”

## ONE FOOT AT A TIME

More than ten years ago, on a Maundy Thursday in a tiny chapel in a center for people who had no homes, we were reborn, both as a small group and deep within individual hearts. All such anointing of the Holy Spirit begins with God. It is an expression of God’s love for us. Our worship is intended to be responsive to that love. When it is, the world begins to be changed, sometimes just one foot at a time.

---

Lynn C. Ramshaw is a retired Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Chicago.



As Christians, we are free to say *yes* or *no*, as long as we are being genuine in what we say. The parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28–31 reminds us that God is concerned with action even more than with words. Just saying *yes* to be agreeable—but with no intention of following through—can be dishonest and deceptive. Christians are to express themselves with honesty and integrity. Only a genuine *yes* or *no* can contribute to the building of the reign of God. And, at times, saying *no* reveals the *yes* of a faithful heart. Here are some examples.

#### **ON A PERSONAL LEVEL**

Saying *no* to unhealthy habits of diet or exercise can reveal the *yes* we are saying to our bodies as gifts of God.

Saying *no* to a cluttered calendar and unlimited activities is a *yes* to time spent with ourselves, loved ones, and our God.

Saying *no* to mindless consumerism and spending can reveal the *yes* of a wise steward seeking to invest in the work of God.

#### **ON A RELATIONSHIP LEVEL**

Saying *no* to those who put us down or abuse us is to say *yes* to the God who cherishes us and wants that love to be reflected in our relationships with others.

Saying *no* to peer pressure can reveal the *yes* we say to the ways of our Savior.

Saying *no* to unreasonable demands on the time and energy of our children can mean that we say *yes* to their opportunities for growth in love, knowledge, and faith.

#### **ON A COMMUNITY, NATIONAL, OR GLOBAL LEVEL**

Saying *no* to a culture that cheapens family relationships and makes sexuality a tool for manipulation or selling things is a way of saying *yes* to the Christian view that sexuality and family are gifts of God.

Saying *no* to prejudice and discrimination means we say *yes* to God's gift of a diverse creation.

Saying *no* to the exploitation of workers by not purchasing sweatshop-produced items means that we say *yes* to the value and worth of all of God's people.

In Matthew 5:37, Jesus is quoted as saying, "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from evil" (NRSV, alternative text). The fact that Jesus refers to dishonest oaths as "evil" reveals the serious nature of our charge as God's people. Standing up to evil is a fearsome prospect, best undertaken with prayer and recognition of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the life

of the baptized believer. It is hard to say *no* to people and powers that seem so much bigger, stronger, and more important than we feel ourselves to be. Only with the powerful presence of God are we able boldly to say *no* when it really matters.

In Matthew 9:36, we are told by the evangelist that Jesus "had compassion on the crowds because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." In this modern world, "harassed and helpless" could describe the feelings of many people. Forces around and within us can leave us wondering when we should say *yes* and when we should say *no*.

Thankfully, we are not without a shepherd. Our Lord Jesus is present with us in Scripture and the power of prayer. Christ empowers us to be bold and answer with the same power and strength as the ancient apostles, the leaders of the Reformation, and the saints we have known personally. And, sometimes, the boldest answer can be *no*!

---

**Donna Hacker Smith serves as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Champaign, Illinois. She shares her life with her husband, Lawrence Smith, her cat, Hercule, and her rabid love of the Chicago Cubs and the University of Illinois Fighting Illini.**

**Session 1**

# Act Boldly with Love

by Sue Gamelin

---

## **Just what is it to act boldly?**

As a new triennium begins for Women of the ELCA, women call to one another, “Act boldly!” Whether gathering in church parlors, around dining room tables, or in basement meeting rooms from the Bronx to Brainerd, from Long Beach, Mississippi, to Long Beach, California, “Act boldly!” we encourage one another.

Mary Ellen Kiesner, recent past president of Women of the ELCA, said, “Without always realizing it, women have always acted boldly. If there’s a need, a call, they respond. Our hope in our diversity is to recognize together how women are acting out their faith in bold ways.”

She is absolutely right. Women have always acted boldly. We just haven’t always realized it. Just what does it mean to act boldly? When is an act bold?

How about you? When have you acted boldly? What was it about? Was it scary or satisfying, frustrating or fulfilling? Or are you like the woman I met who insisted that she had no spiritual gifts—do you think that you’ve never been a bold woman?

## **One kind of bold**

There are two Greek words in the New Testament for boldness. One of them, *tolmao* (tol-MAH-oh), describes the boldness of acting on something because we know our faith calls us to it, even though we are so scared that we can barely think or speak.

This kind of boldness finds us doing something despite our fear. Have you ever agreed to give a speech because you believed strongly in the cause—and found yourself clutching the sides of the podium with a white-knuckled death grip? Have you sat down to tell someone that they use hurtful names for people who are different from themselves—and felt your heart pounding?

One day, years ago, my son burst into tears as soon as he came in the door after school. He was in fourth grade. “I’m not supposed to tell you something,” he said, gulping down sobs. “My teacher said we’d be in big trouble if we told our parents.” I was afraid even to guess what he wasn’t supposed to tell me. I put my arm around him and waited until he could get the story out.

“See, the teacher always gets mad at this one boy, and when she gets mad at him, she grabs her scissors, pushes him against the wall, and cuts off some of his hair.” I sat by him and stroked his hair as he cried harder. “This time she did it when he bumped into her by accident. He didn’t mean anything by it.” This is scary stuff for a ten-year-old; a bold child, this one. It’s scary stuff for a forty-year-old mom, too.

The next morning I walked into the principal’s office, the first time I’d ever done so in my history as a mother of four. I needed to tell my son’s story to honor his courage, his *tolmao* boldness. I needed to tell this story to reach out to the other boy.

There are times when we need to do something in spite of our fear of doing it. These are the times when we need to be this kind of bold, *tolmao* bold. The New Testament word *tolmao* fits these actions. The Gospel writer Mark used *tolmao* to describe Joseph of Arimathea when he “went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus” (15:43).

### Another kind of bold

The other New Testament word for bold describes those times when we are so certain of something that we can’t hold back from speaking openly, even passionately, about it. This Greek word *parrhesia* (par-ray-SEE-uh) is used by the Gospel writer Mark to describe how Jesus told his disciples that the Son of Man would undergo great suffering, be rejected and killed, and then rise again. Jesus “said this quite openly,” according to Mark 8:32. The word *parrhesia* is translated “openly” in the New Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible. It could also be translated “boldly.” *Parrhesia* is translated this way in the NRSV version of 2 Corinthians 3:12: “Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness.”

Evelyn is in her late nineties. Her laugh has aged wonderfully with her body. When I last visited her she showed me her new hearing device, the walker she has been using since a spinal fracture, and her stronger-than-ever eyeglasses. She made light of it: “I’m all spare parts!” she laughed. But she was serious when she talked about her bone-deep conviction that our role as God’s children is to help other people. I have known Evelyn for thirty years and have heard this speech from her many times, delivered with all the strength and conviction in her tiny body.

Although she had to give up her ministry as a hospital volunteer at age ninety-five, she has found a new position. She has taken on the important work

of sending cards to folks in her congregation who are going through difficult times. Of course, she’s also continuing with her years-long role in creating programs for Women of the ELCA circles at her church. Evelyn acts boldly with her words and with her life.

### Galatians 5:22–23

#### The grounding for our entire study

Acting boldly can take many forms. We can act boldly with love, with joy, in peace, with patience, with kindness, with generosity, with faithfulness, with gentleness, and with self-control. Do you recognize this list of nine benefits—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, gentleness, and self-control? They are the fruit of the Spirit that the apostle Paul lists in Galatians 5:22–23.

Paul likes to draw us into thinking about the contrast between a life lived to satisfy ourselves and a life offered to and blessed by God. Martin Luther describes the first kind of living as being “curved in on ourselves” (in Latin, *incurvatus in se*). When we’re curved in on ourselves, we want to grab all we can get—at the expense of others. We create a “me, myself, and I” world that ends up trashing the neighborhood.

Paul is deeply concerned in Galatians 5:19–21 about self-centered acts that are immoral, the desires that find us bowing down before false gods, the decisions that lead to chaos in the body that is community, and the self-indulgence that leads to harm in the body of the sinner.

Our children grew up listening to the music from the play *Godspell*. One day we realized that our youngest, then four, had her own version of the song “Day by Day.” She was singing with her sweet child’s voice, “Day by day, day by day, O dear Lord, three things I pray: to see me more clearly, to

love me more dearly, to follow me more nearly, day by day.” Being only four, she had replaced an unfamiliar word *thee* with one she knew, *me*. Her innocent misquotation may be the figurative theme song of all too many adults who should know better. *Incurvatus in se*.

But just when we are overwhelmed by Paul’s discouraging list of things to which a curved-in life can lead, we smell the fragrance of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in verse 22. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are sweet-smelling gifts to us, grown on the vine that is our living Lord, Jesus the Christ, and bursting into life on us, the branches. We pluck this fruit through our prayers. Sometimes it surprises us by bursting into our lives with its goodness when we are in the midst of something ugly. It may have been delivered because of your prayers or the prayers of others for you.

Have you ever been in the middle of an argument, realized that your anger was fueled by rotten apples and oranges from the past, and deliberately reached instead for the fruit of self-control? It takes boldness to hold our tongues and replace bitter fruit with sweet. Have you asked others to pray for the fruit of patience for you when you are confronted by the irrationality or stubbornness of a preschooler or of an elderly parent whose body or mind is failing? It takes boldness to be patient and not simply slam the door after a difficult morning.

The fruit of the Spirit flavors our boldness. It is a contrast to the foul smell of the aggressiveness that grows out of being curved in on ourselves. Of the many ways of acting boldly, acting with the gifts of the Spirit can be a fruitful way to proceed.

## LET’S TALK ABOUT BOLDNESS

- When have you found yourself being *talmao* bold—bold because you knew your faith was calling you to it even though your knees were shaking?
- When have you found yourself speaking unhesitatingly, even passionately, without a second thought, about something you know to be true? When have you been bold in this way—*parrhesia* bold?

### Mary anoints Jesus’ feet

You’ve heard stories about a bold child and a bold woman who is nine decades old. Let’s look now at another bold woman, a woman who acted boldly with love. She acted with the kind of love that we can have only with God’s help.

Listen to this story from John 12:1–8. Have three readers tell the story, one serving as narrator, one in the role of Judas Iscariot, and one speaking as Jesus. Notice that Mary speaks with her actions; her voice is silent.

**Narrator:** Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said,

**Judas:** “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?”

**Narrator:** (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said,

**Jesus:** “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

Does Mary, in this event in Jesus’ life, fit into your understanding of someone who is acting boldly? Let’s explore this question as we look at the setting of this amazing story.

It isn’t by accident that the Gospel writer, John, says that it took place “six days before the Passover.” John’s first readers would have understood that the Passover lamb was selected six days before the Passover. This lamb would be sacrificed for the all-important Passover meal. “Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,” we sing Sunday after Sunday. Jesus became our sacrificial lamb six days before the Passover.

Did Mary realize that Jesus was being chosen as the Passover lamb? Is that why she brought out expensive perfume, made of pure nard, kept for the day of his burial?

And what is nard, anyway? It’s a plant from whose root rich oil was extracted and made into an ointment-like perfume. There were about twelve ounces in this “pound,” the word we use to translate the word *litran*, a Greek and Roman measure. Twelve ounces of pure nard could be sold for three hundred denarii, says Judas in the story. One denarius was the average daily wage; three hundred denarii would support a family for almost a year. When Mary poured the ointment over Jesus’ feet, the whole house was filled with the fragrance, like the smell of Easter lilies filling

our worship spaces on Easter Day. How lovely. How generous.

But how dare Mary invade this dinner party! In Jesus’ time, when guests were present, men ate separately from the women. The men reclined on couches placed around a low table, leaning on one elbow. There was room for servants to come and go, bringing food and drink: That would have been what Martha was doing. How dare Mary interrupt this male camaraderie. How dare she slip in to sit at Jesus’ feet as she had time after time, listening and learning from him. How scandalous of her to use her hair to wipe his feet. Her hair!

## LET’S TALK ABOUT MARY

- Why did Mary anoint Jesus’ feet, not his head, as would have been the custom to honor a guest? See Psalm 23:5. Did Mary’s anointing of Jesus’ feet perhaps have a connection to Jesus’ washing his disciples’ feet in the next chapter of John’s Gospel, chapter 13:2c–16?
- Do you think John 12:1–8 is a story of a woman acting boldly in love? If you do, what kind of boldness do you think Mary demonstrated: *tolmao* or *parrhesia*?

Then there’s Judas. Talk about ruining a precious, poignant moment. Judas reminds us of that member of the family who can’t let a tender moment be just that, a tender moment, but always has to follow it with a remark that annoys everyone. “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” “Why did you spend so much on this? I don’t need such an expensive Mother’s Day present at a time like this.”

## LET'S TALK ABOUT JUDAS

- What do you think of Jesus' answer to Judas' indignation? What would you have said to Judas?
- What does Jesus mean when he says that we don't always have him with us? What about Matthew 28:20?

## LET'S TALK ABOUT OURSELVES

- Share a story about a time when you or someone you know acted boldly in love.
- Who needs your bold act of love today? This week?

### Additional study: other women anointing Jesus

If you have time, look at these two similar accounts of a woman anointing Jesus. You'll find these accounts in Matthew 26:6–13 and Mark 14:3–9. What differences do you notice between them and John 12:1–8?

Still another account differs remarkably from these three. In Luke 7:36–50, there is a different purpose behind the Gospel writer's account of a woman anointing Jesus. In this Gospel, the focus is on the forgiveness of sin and the gratitude of the forgiven sinner.

### When do we anoint people?

Have you ever rubbed baby lotion on a round little belly and chubby legs still warm from a bath? Was the bathroom filled with the fragrance?

At the beach or pool, have you rubbed sunscreen onto your friend's back, helping her avoid a painful sunburn? Have you used the same lotion to anoint a friend's nose at the ski slopes?

Have you made chicken soup for a member of your congregation who was down with bronchitis, knowing that the soup would help ease a raw throat and that the gift of a meal would bless a lonely day?

Have you brought hand lotion to a nursing home and rubbed it into hands laced with swollen blood vessels, knotted with arthritis, and hungry for touch?

With your gifts of time, service, and money, has your group greased the wheels of agencies and institutions seeking justice for victims of violence, poverty, and discrimination? Have you done something to help women and children in poverty in your town?

Have you thrown oil on the troubled waters of discrimination and injustice by standing up for people different from yourself? Has your group shared their experiences doing this and helped each other grow bolder for this vital task?

Has the fragrance of your witness filled the room at a political meeting or a meeting of your block club as you argued against exclusionary tactics or the pursuit of gain at the expense of others?

### Anointing Ed

I had been stopping by Ed's little house from time to time as lung cancer took its toll on him. Various members of his family—daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren—were always there when I would knock on the door. They didn't want to leave Ed's side. My phone rang at three o'clock one morning, and a tearful daughter told me that they thought Ed was dying. Would I come over?

I did and joined the group around Ed's bed in the darkness before dawn. But it wasn't yet Ed's time. He rallied as the sun began to rise.

Late one afternoon, I stopped by again, knocking lightly on the screen door. I could see Ed inside, in the hospital bed that had taken over the living room. I stepped in, hearing his daughters' voices in the kitchen a few feet away. They were talking as sisters do, and I could hear the rattling of coffee cups. Ed and I were alone together. He took one look at me and died, sighing a long last breath. I stood there a moment, awestruck, wondering if he had truly begun that journey about which we can only guess. Yes, his chest was still and his unblinking eyes were focused on something far away. I moved quickly into the kitchen and gently told the sisters, "Your father has just died."

Chaos erupted as they rushed into the little living room and stood over their father's body. Weeping filled the room. "We weren't with him. We wanted to be with him. We were just gone for a moment. How could this happen?" Their agony at not being there when he sighed that last breath was coupled with their grief at losing him.

We called the hospice nurse, and within minutes she was there. "I'm going to prepare Ed's body before the funeral director comes," she said. "Would you like to watch?" The sisters and the others who had rushed over when the phone calls were made started to turn away. But I said, "I would like to watch," and sat down by Ed's body.

So did the others. They were uneasy, but they didn't want to be left out. The nurse smoothed Ed's wasted body with lotion. She rubbed lotion into his gaunt face and thin neck, then uncovered one wizened arm and smoothed lotion all over it. She covered that arm, then uncovered and rubbed lotion into the other arm. She did the same with each side of his hollow chest, and then his bony legs and feet. We watched, mesmerized and healed by her tender and loving ministry.

The fragrance of the lotion filled the house. That and the nurse's bold act of love soothed the aching hearts and raw emotions of those who loved Ed. Ed's body was anointed. So were the lives of his family.

## LET'S TALK

- When do you feel loved? Complete the sentence, "I feel loved when . . ."

The Rev. Sue Gamelin and her husband, Tim, are pastors of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, High Point, North Carolina. She is an award-winning writer and gifted storyteller whose writings have appeared frequently in *LWT*. She earned her master of divinity degree in 1980 from Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

# ACT BOLDLY

*in the Fruit of the Spirit*

# CREATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

by Deanna Larson



Families around the world wake each morning in terror and go to bed at night shaking with that same terror. Often, that fear stems from a life of conflict and violence rooted in discrimination, hunger, poverty, and powerlessness.

The United Nations' annual International Day of Peace on September 21 challenges people to think differently—and respond differently—to tensions and violence in their own communities and to “rise above national boundaries, politics, religion and ideologies . . . and celebrate cultural diversities rather than using them as a reason for conflict,” according to the World Peace Prayer Society.

Creating a culture of peace starts with individual beliefs and actions that promote justice, compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness. Is your home peaceful? Your relationships? What about your congregation, schools, workplace, or your community?

Christians can throw that first “peace” pebble into the pond and let the tiny ripples expand into larger circles of influence. Start this month by seeking to heal conflicts and hostility among family, friends, members of your congregation, and co-workers. Seek win-win solutions to conflicts, advises the Lutheran Peace Fellowship, and pray for those who hurt you. Ask hard questions

of yourself and admit your vested interest in a system that favors some and oppresses others. Then become part of the larger circle of influence by volunteering your time with church and community organizations that work to overcome violence and abuse.

“To go beyond study is always important,” said Sharon Heck, a Peace with Justice activist in California who has been involved with Bread for the World, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in California, and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Heck attended the ELCA’s “Equipping for Peacemaking” conference in April 2005 in Chicago,

which aimed to build a “network of peacemakers,” according to the Rev. Michelle Miller of the ELCA Commission for Women.

### Ways you can make a difference

There are a great many things Lutheran women can do in the movement toward peacemaking, Heck said. Advocate for youth activities and jobs “to help assuage violence in neighborhoods”; work with a soup kitchen or food bank to “ease the violence that can accompany hunger”; or write letters to elected officials to “help change laws that foster hunger and violence,” she said.

You can teach a parenting class, which could save a child from abuse, or help a homeless person

or victim of domestic violence find a safe haven, or work with school officials to ensure that non-violence is taught to children.

The United Nations also suggests organizing a peace walk, visiting a hospital or nursing home, volunteering at a recycling center, planting a tree, or making a new friend. “Every little effort matters,” said Crystal Klein, another participant in the “Equipping for Peacemaking” conference.

Peace-themed Bible passages, prayer, song, and worship highlighting the role of Christ and his teachings of healing and reconciliation are often overlooked as daily and weekly tools to create peace, Klein said.

Pray and act, and don’t feel that small efforts are not enough. Simple words and deeds often correspond to “huge biblical actions,” writes Ray Waddle in *A Turbulent Peace: The Psalms for Our Time*. The tensions between peace and upheaval, violence, death, and eternal life define faith, Waddle writes. And our struggles to think and act in peaceable ways expose not only our frail humanity, but our link to Christ and redemption.

“It solidifies us as Christians in what God calls us to do,” Klein said.

---

Deanna Larson is a feature writer in Nashville, Tenn.

## RESOURCES FOR PEACEMAKING

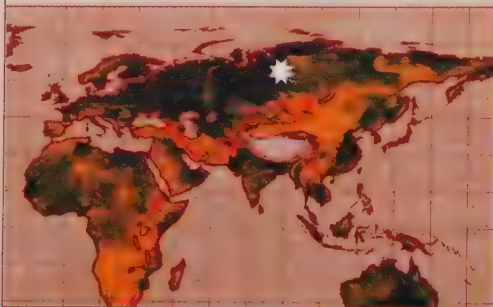
The Decade to Overcome Violence (2001–2010) is an initiative of the World Council of Churches, a fellowship of churches from more than 120 countries. The DOV includes peacemaking activities, events, and resources for peacekeeping at: [www.overcomingviolence.org](http://www.overcomingviolence.org) or [www.wcc-coe.org](http://www.wcc-coe.org).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offers peace program ideas, Web links to non-violence movements and organizations, and worship resources at [www.elca.org/nonviolence](http://www.elca.org/nonviolence). Check out the Social Statement of the ELCA, “Peace in God’s World,” at [www.elca.org/socialstatements/peace/](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements/peace/).

Make a peace pledge, read peace proclamations from around the world, download the free community education manual, *We Want Peace on Earth*, and learn how to throw a “peace party” at [www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org).

The Lutheran Peace Fellowship features advocacy and worship ideas, and excellent articles and resources for peacemaking; call 206-720-0313 or visit [http://members.tripod.com/~lutheran\\_peace](http://members.tripod.com/~lutheran_peace).

## RUSSIA



### GEOGRAPHY

6.592 million square miles (almost twice the size of the U.S.)

### CLIMATE

From subarctic in Siberia to humid continental climate in European Russia

### POPULATION

143 million people

### CAPITAL

Moscow (pop. 8.39 million)

### MAJOR RELIGIONS

88% Russian Orthodox; 9% Muslim

### LIFE EXPECTANCY

Men, 60 years; women, 74 years

### INFANT MORTALITY

15.39 deaths per 1,000 live births

### POVERTY RATE

25%

### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

\$1.408 trillion

### UNEMPLOYMENT

8.3%, plus much underemployment

Go to [www.elca.org/countrypackets](http://www.elca.org/countrypackets) to learn more about Russia and other countries.

## ONE SHARED MEAL

### *Peace-building in Russia*

by Anne Basye

One of the most powerful peace-building tools is employed daily at the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy (MPC) in Russia: a delicious, hot meal. Every day, the soup kitchen run by the interdenominational, international English-speaking Christian congregation feeds six hundred people—elderly Russians with inadequate pensions, MPC members from African countries, and anyone else who walks in the door.

“The meals are miraculous because they pull us all into one shared meal—creating a space of relationship between Africans and Russians, men and women, young and old, East and West,” says Sara Olson, a senior at the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, who served as an MPC intern in 2004–2005. “There is an amazing sense of life and human care at the soup kitchen that is not always present in our lives here.”

MPC has ministered to the foreign community of Moscow since 1962. It welcomes immigrants, refugees, and students for whom life in Moscow is lonely and dangerous. Citizens of Russia’s closed, inward-looking society can be suspicious of foreigners.

Skinheads—young men who shave their heads and dress in combat gear—take it a step further and express their hatred through physical attacks. Typically, a group of ten to thirty skinheads will stake out a victim for assault with punches and kicking or bottles and blunt objects. Police respond reluctantly, if at all.



*Sara Olson at the soup kitchen*

Following a skinhead attack on an MPC member outside its worship space, fellow congregants—men and women—leapt into action. Together, they created a Task Force on Racial Attacks and Harassment that gathers and distributes evidence and data regarding racial attacks and harassment to embassies, human rights groups, Russian government officials, and the media.

Members also provide spiritual, pastoral, and emergency care to victims of these attacks and other disasters. Sheila (not her real name), an Ethiopian student, has experienced first-hand care from the task force. She had been in Moscow only a few weeks when fire broke out in her dormitory at the Russian People's Friendship University. When she jumped from the building to escape the flames, she was injured seriously. Members and friends of MPC donated \$10,000 to help secure medical care for Sheila and other injured students. The task force also called for the students' care by the university, which still refuses to claim responsibility for the tragic fire.

Although there is no proof, many suspect that the fire was racially motivated. Most of the victims—forty-two dead and two hundred injured—were from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In addition to helping care for survivors and collecting and distributing emergency provisions, task force members also directed international journalists to eyewitnesses who could provide truthful accounts about the fire and assisted embassy officials in outreach to their citizens.

"There are few places to turn if one is in danger or has experienced violence," Sara explains. "The militia and police cannot always be trusted and even ambulance drivers give better service for bribes. Though the support, knowledge, and presence that we are able to provide to these people feel incredibly limited to us, they are profound for the victims of violence."

#### MEALS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD

"I don't know about other countries, but in Moscow, we foreigners can see what true racism is," says Mari Arutyunova,

## RUSSIA



#### LABOR FORCE

12.3% agriculture; 22.7% industry; 65% services

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

Wide variety of resources including major deposits of oil, natural gas, coal, many strategic minerals, and timber

#### AGRICULTURE

Grains, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, vegetables, fruits, beef, milk

#### INDUSTRY

Mining and extraction industries producing coal, oil, gas, chemicals, and metals; machine building; shipbuilding; transportation equipment; communications equipment; electric-power and construction equipment; medical and scientific instruments; consumer durables; foodstuffs; textiles; handicrafts

who first visited the MPC's soup kitchen in 1991 after her mother lost her job. Mari has faced discrimination all her life—first, as a “foreign-looking” child of parents from Estonia and Yugoslavia, and second, as the mother of an Afro-Russian child. Through an organization called Metis, Mari invites other women and families like hers to experience welcome, safety, and fellowship at MPC.

Mari is head of the music committee for MPC's young adult and student ministry. Its international members find refuge from Moscow's cold shoulder by gathering twice a month to celebrate birthdays, pray in the midst of difficulties, and support one another in faith. Most participants in the ministry are men. All foreigners in Moscow face danger, but men feel more secure navigating the city's streets and subways than women do.

But some women find gathering with other Christians worth the risk: like Lila, from India, who is completing her medical studies; Muriel, from Nigeria, who survives without documentation by taking odd jobs because the work and housing she was promised evaporated on her arrival in Moscow; and Sheila, from Ethiopia, who resumed her studies after recovering from her fire injuries.

For these women, MPC's daily meals and bimonthly fellowship are a space for peace and reconciliation. “Our soup kitchen is a place where women can create a place of peace, where we can sit and share a meal together over conversation, listening, and welcome,” says Sara. “Around tables where we share food from all over the world, we are able to put aside all

that separates us and begin to relate to one another as human beings.”

None of the MPC staff or members is Russian, so they understand each other's plight and are uniquely positioned to champion other outsiders. They know how lonely and dangerous life can be and how deeply foreigners long for a place to express and be nourished in their faith.

“I hope that people feel that they have a second home here in MPC, as I do, that they have many friends, as I do, and that they know that whatever happens, they have somebody to share with, as I do,” says Mari. “People who might be losing the faith can see the true power of our Lord through this church.”

Invited in by daily meals and services, outsiders discover a community of warmth and joy, song, and prayer. MPC members are following a path to peace and justice by offering those experiences: Hot food and genuine fellowship break down walls and build new relationships, while feeding all who are hungry for reconciliation.

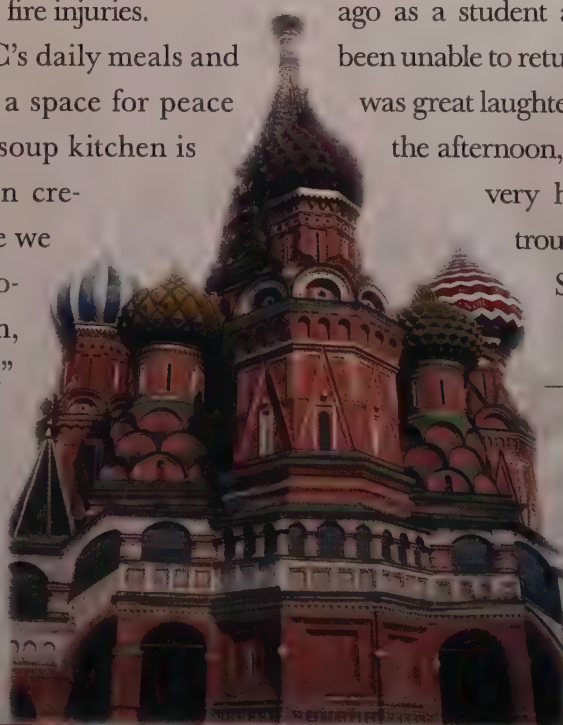
“Just yesterday I was in the parish center with an African woman who had come to Russia years ago as a student and has, for various reasons, been unable to return home,” recalls Sara. “There was great laughter around the place throughout the afternoon, and she said to me, ‘Life is so very hard, and there are so many troubles—more and more each day.

So what can we do but laugh!’

“And so we did.”

---

Anne Basye is associate director for Global Resources, ELCA Division for Global Mission, and a member of Unity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.



## BACKGROUND

Fourteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's political situation is fragile. High levels of crime and corruption, difficult living conditions, and a ruined economy have helped breed suspicion and fear of change that can target foreigners and immigrants.

The most formidable opponent of Russia's civil war with Chechnya is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. This impassioned group of women has won international human rights prizes for campaigning for an end to the war and advocating military reform.

During the Soviet era, religion was considered a threat to the power of the Communist party. While the state tolerated religious practice and even paid for the Orthodox Church's maintenance costs and seminaries, it also turned churches, synagogues, and mosques into museums and civil buildings, published school textbooks with antireligious propaganda, and harassed and discriminated against believers. But faith persisted.

Since 1991, the Russian Orthodox Church has struggled to regain its influence in Russian life. It has tried to restrict the development of what it calls "non-traditional" religions, including Roman Catholicism and Mormonism. The efforts of Protestant churches like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS) are restricted. In April 2005, ELCROS's bishop—a German citizen who was born in Russia—was deported to Germany.

## PRAYER

Strengthen the hands of women working for peace in Russia: mothers who speak out against the war in Chechnya, and women who welcome strangers into hospitality and safety.

## ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE

The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Prayer Cycle ([www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/01-02.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/01-02.html)) enables us to journey in prayer through every region of the world and through every week of the year affirming our solidarity with Christians all over the world. In addition to those in Russia, please pray this month for people working for peace in the following countries.

|                    |            |            |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Czech Republic     | Macedonia  | Belarus    |
| Poland             | Slovenia   | Moldova    |
| Slovakia           | Yugoslavia | Ukraine    |
| Albania            | Bulgaria   | Armenia    |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | Hungary    | Azerbaijan |
| Croatia            | Romania    | Georgia    |

## WELCOMING THE STRANGER

This month's peacemakers are women who welcome the stranger in a culture that is hostile to the "other."

Welcoming the stranger is one way of promoting peace and understanding among people. When Jesus talks about the ones who inherit the kingdom, he says, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). This is important work today, when millions of people live far from their homes. Almost twenty-two million people are refugees. Millions of others are economic migrants. About 10 percent of the U.S. population—almost thirty million people—was born outside the United States.

Where suspicion of others drives out trust, peace cannot thrive. What can you do today in your community to make strangers, refugees, and immigrants feel more welcome?

# ACTION & ADVOCACY GUIDE

## **Making a Difference** (page 8)

Women of the ELCA offers scholarships in three categories: for Lutheran laywomen, for administrative leadership, and for ordained ministry. All scholarships are awarded to women who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The application period for scholarships begins December 15, 2005, and ends February 15, 2006. Complete applications must be postmarked by February 15, 2006. You may get additional information and forms for the 2006-2007 school year on the Web site ([www.womenoftheelca.org/whatwedo/scholarships.html](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/whatwedo/scholarships.html)) in November 2005. If you have questions, contact Emily Hansen at [emily.hansen@elca.org](mailto:emily.hansen@elca.org) or 800-638-3522, ext. 2736.

## **God 101: Covering the Basics** (page 10)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is preparing a social statement on education. Work on the social

statement began in 2003. The 2007 Churchwide Assembly, it is anticipated, will consider the proposed social statement. ([www.elca.org/socialstatements/education](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements/education))

## **One Shared Meal: Peace-building in Russia** (page 38)

ELCA Division for Global Mission has ready-to-use information on more than 75 countries to help you learn more about the world in which we live. There are maps, country descriptions, prayer ventures, crafts, recipes, and more under each country. Go to [www.elca.org/countrypackets](http://www.elca.org/countrypackets) to learn more. The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Prayer Cycle ([www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/01-02.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/01-02.html)) offers a journey in prayer through every region of the world and through every week of the year. The prayer cycle affirms our solidarity with Christians all over the world.



# Rose Parade

## Golden West Tour

**10 Days Featuring:**  
**Los Angeles, Las Vegas, & Laughlin!**



Join your clergy host Lutheran minister Rev. Larry Koehn and other Lutherans; get away from the colder weather during the first week in January; avoid the post holiday blahs, and enjoy the best New Year's Eve and New Years Day you've had in years on this ten day tour! Included is five nights in Los Angeles, California (at the LAX Renaissance Hotel); two nights in Las Vegas, Nevada on the strip (The Excalibur Hotel); two nights in Laughlin, Nevada on the Colorado River (Harrahs); RESERVED GRANDSTAND SEATS AT THE ROSE PARADE; YMT's city tour of L.A., Hollywood and Beverly Hills; up close float viewing the day before the parade; Calico Ghost Town; baggage handling; hotel transfers and optional sightseeing tours including the Pageant of Christmas at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. You've seen the parade on TV for years; now see the excitement and hoopla of the most famous parade in America live and up close. The sights and sounds all make being there truly spectacular. Your price, including all taxes: only \$948 (per person, double occupancy). Airfare is extra and starts at \$300 per person; or obtain your own. Call for prices from your closest major airport. \$100 deposits are now due.

For information, reservations, letter from Rev. Koehn, and brochure with detailed itinerary, call 7 days a week:  
**'YOUR MAN' TOURS - 1-800-968-7626 - Providing carefree vacations since 1967!**



GRACE NOTES

# United through Baptism

by Linda Post Bushkofsky

## I HAD BEEN GIVEN AN ASSIGNMENT—WRITE ON MAINTAINING UNITY EVEN IN THE MIDST OF OUR DIVERSITY.

I wasn't too excited about the assignment because nothing came to mind immediately. And, frankly, nothing came to mind over the next several weeks, either. The deadline had passed a week before I joined in worship at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Miami. I didn't go to Trinity that morning expecting inspiration, but I found it.

There is so much that can divide us, I thought, as I surveyed the congregation. Blacks, Whites, and Latinas were gathered there. Some appeared to have a lot of money, some very little. Some spoke English, a few did not. Even as we gathered in the pews, there were Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals sitting together.

We humans are a curious lot, allowing many things (and sometimes *any* thing) to divide us, separating us into "us" and "them." Rather than celebrating the wonderful diversity that is part of God's plan for all creation, we pervert that diversity into division. Race, ethnicity, income, language, politics, abilities, denominations, age . . . we allow these (and more) to separate us, both within our faith communities and in society. Yet those who gathered at Trinity that day, as well as all who gather for worship week after week in our congregations, were baptized into one body. Differences are irrelevant in the face of that overwhelming reality.

In our sinful human nature, we allow the devilish lure of "us" and "them" to infiltrate our very beings. We label ourselves and those around us, even those

we don't know, separating ourselves. I was reminded of that at Trinity when our prayers asked that "our divisions may cease and that all may be one" just as the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier are one. We went on to pray for Trinity's congregation, that they may be "delivered from hardness of heart," which reminded me that sometimes it is our own hardness of heart that keeps divisions in place and works against the unity that is ours in baptism.

What are those particular things that divide us in Women of the ELCA? The list isn't that much different than that within our church or society: race, ethnicity, income, language, politics, abilities, age, sexual orientation, even theology. God's great design of diversity has gifted our organization with many ages, races, languages, abilities . . . the list goes on. We can pervert our diversity into divisions that break us apart and separate us or we can witness to the unity of the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier God by uniting in our baptism and choosing to celebrate the great diversity that is God's gift to all creation.

The benediction at Trinity that Sunday suggested a prayer that we might all offer as we repent from our divisive ways and try to live into the unity that is ours in our baptisms. The presiding minister prayed that God might be with us, with those we love, those we find difficult to love, and those who find it difficult to love us. May it be so.

---

Linda Post Bushkofsky is executive director of Women of the ELCA.



A M E N !

## To See and Respond

by Catherine Malotky

**GOD, TODAY I MET SOMEONE CROSSING THE STREET. HE OR SHE—I COULDN'T TELL—WAS COMPLETELY COVERED.**

It was a lovely day and most people were uncovering, basking in the gentle warmth. But this person plowed through the delicate breeze as if it were a winter storm: with hat pulled down low, sunglasses, tape-covered nose, cheeks, and mouth, turtleneck, jacket, and gloves. Completely covered.

God, I wonder why that person was so cloaked?

I was slightly stunned but went on my way as if it were normal that someone would work that hard to hide in plain sight. I was, in many ways, as anonymous as that person. I was hiding too, behind a pleasant façade, focused on getting to my destination, not on the needs and fears of some hidden person I encountered, but don't know at all.

But there are many such people in my world, God. They may not cover up with white tape and sunglasses. I may not pass them on the street, but they are there. They are hungry, or sick, or grieving, or trapped by a history that never taught them what they needed to know or set them up to have a chance.

Simple things I often take for granted are missing for some. I can read. I have enough to eat and a safe place to live. Any number of people encouraged me to believe that I could do whatever I wanted to, and my race and my genes mean that that is pretty much true. My husband doesn't beat me, and we can help our kids go to college and save for our own retirement. And my daughters are really cool people, even if we do tangle sometimes.

What would it be like, God, to be in so much pain that I had to cover up with sunglasses and tape? What would it be like to live with violence? To work hard and barely make it? To be unable to read? To be an object of scorn because of my color or my disability?

God, you told your people, our forebears in faith, again and again, to protect those who are left out, on the margins. Long ago, that meant widows and orphans and sojourners. Today, there are so many on the margins.

We might not see them on the street, but according to you, God, they are our neighbors. They are people we should care about. We can get so busy getting to our destinations that we walk right by without hesitating, without even noticing. We can be so focused on our own welfare that we forget to think that it's strange that children are living in poverty and that we wage war to create peace.

It's not simple, God. Nothing is. But we should notice when your great love for every one of us and for the creation is not being made manifest in our world for every one of us and for the creation. You have enough love to go around. Make us bold, God. Make us see and respond with love. Amen.

---

Catherine Malotky serves the ELCA Board of Pensions as retirement planning manager. An ordained pastor, she has also been an editor, teacher, parish pastor, and retreat leader.



Photo by Martha E. Wunsch

In May, members of St. Paul Lutheran—Borchers, Seymour, Indiana, sent Lutheran World Relief (LWR) 246 blankets, 87 school kits, 56 health kits, 46 sewing kits, and 52 layettes for shipment overseas. Parishioners and friends provided materials and loving labor through the winter months to finish all these projects, which decorated the church before they were sent to LWR. St. Paul—Borchers' women have been making blankets and quilts for LWR for three decades.

Front row, left to right, are: Jan Otte, Mildred Carter, Betty Hoene, and Edna Dye. Back row, left to right, are Alvin Hoene, Paul Otte, and Gerald Wunsch.

Submit a photo of your group's efforts to make the world a better place. Mail it to Lutheran Woman Today, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631. Please include a complete explanation of the project, phone number where you can be reached, and the name of the photographer. E-mail photos to [lwt@elca.org](mailto:lwt@elca.org).

## DIRECTORY OF READER SERVICES

### SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE

Change of address, renewals, problems related to your subscription, and new subscription orders must be addressed to our subscription order center at Augsburg Fortress.

**800-328-4648**

**LWT Subscription Order Center  
Box 1209**

**Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730**

[subscriptions@augburgfortress.org](mailto:subscriptions@augburgfortress.org)

### Audiotape edition

**800-328-4648**

### Permission to reprint articles

**800-421-0239** [copyright@augburgfortress.org](mailto:copyright@augburgfortress.org)

### Advertising Inquiries

Elizabeth O'Hara, Account Executive

100 S. Fifth Street, Suite 700

Minneapolis, MN 55402

**800-426-0115, ext. 417** [oharae@augburgfortress.org](mailto:oharae@augburgfortress.org)

### LWT Editorial Office

For editorial feedback, magazine promotion questions, or freelance submissions, write:

LWT Editorial Office

Women of the ELCA

8765 W. Higgins Rd.

Chicago, IL 60631-4189

**800-638-3522, ext. 2743**

[lwt@elca.org](mailto:lwt@elca.org) [www.lutheranwomantoday.org](http://www.lutheranwomantoday.org)

### Bible Study Resource Orders

Bible Study Leader Guides, Companion Bibles, etc.

**800-328-4648** [www.augburgfortress.org](http://www.augburgfortress.org)

### Bible Study On-line Discussion

<http://webboard.elca.org:8080/~woboard>

# Bestselling Historical Fiction from Favorite Authors

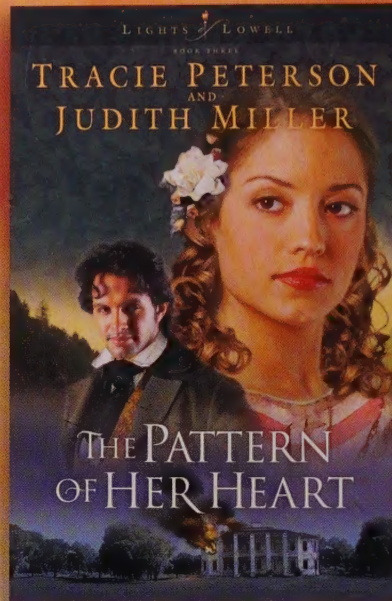


## A HISTORICAL NOVEL SET ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

The stories of four weary travelers intertwine at Harrow Hall. A young girl searching for her lost love, a ship captain escaping his past in the slave trade, and a couple determined to change the world all gather at the mysterious manor. Richly-textured settings, memorable characters, and surprising plot twists guarantee *The Noble Fugitive* to be an unforgettable adventure.

*The Noble Fugitive*  
by T. Davis and Isabella Bunn

Also by T. Davis Bunn  
*Heirs of Arcadia*  
*The Solitary Envoy*  
*the Innocent Liberine*

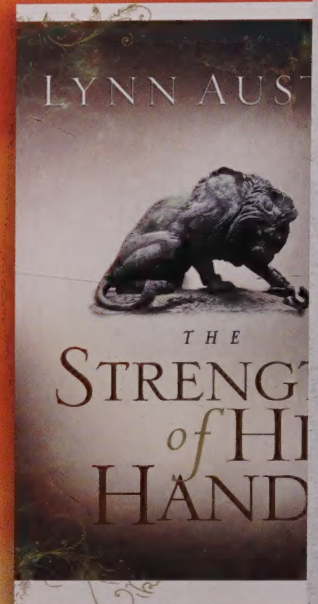


## THE FINAL CHAPTER IN A BESTSELLING SERIES

Jasmine and Nolan Houston return to the South to take over The Willows. When the couple's anti-slavery position causes tension, an explosive act forces Jasmine and Nolan to flee to the North. The lives of the slaves they promised to protect hang in the balance. *The Pattern of Her Heart* is a gripping conclusion to the bestselling LIGHTS OF LOWELL series.

*The Pattern of Her Heart*  
by Tracie Peterson and Judith Miller  
LIGHTS OF LOWELL #3

Also in LIGHTS OF LOWELL:  
*A Tapestry of Hope*  
*A Love Woven True*



## LOVE AND FAITH ARE IN THIS BIBLICAL DR


Nearly too late Hezekiah finds his love. He has made a forbidden pact with the devil to bear a son. As his love is tested by betrayal, his faith will be tested by an overwhelming enemy—the Assyrians are marching toward his kingdom. Austin brings the Old Testament to life in *The Strength of His Hand*.

*The Strength of His Hand* by Lynn Austin  
CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS #3

Also in CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS:  
*Gods and Kings*  
*Song of Redemption*

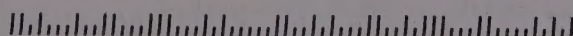
**BETHANYHOUSE** 11400 Hampshire Avenue S. • Minneapolis, MN 55438  
www.bethanyhouse.com

Available from your local Christian bookstore or by calling 1-866-241-6733.

the magazine of Women **of the ELCA** 

#BXNRXWW \*\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*SCH 3-DIGIT 946  
#81000056489# 1000000547 MAR06  
GRADUATE THEOL UNION  
LIBRARY-SERIALS DEPT  
2400 RIDGE RD  
BERKELEY CA 94709-1212

0001  
S071  
219



Please direct all changes of address to Augsburg Fortress, Publishers (see inside back cover).